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ABSTRACT

This publication focuses on motivation at the school level and identifies ways in which administrators can improve student academic achievement. Chapter 1 discusses the influence of school culture on student motivation, based on recent research that suggests the importance of educational leaders in creating a motivating environment for improved student performance. Chapter 2 examines the relationships among student motivation, current educational practices, and school restructuring. Research indicates that many pedagogical practices effectively stifle most students' desire to learn. This calls for a radical change in teaching. The third chapter provides a brief overview of some current theories of motivation at the individual and organizational levels. The conclusion suggests that school leaders attempt a variety of strategies for increasing student motivation. Three approaches are identified: cultivating a conducive school culture; restructuring instructional practices; and understanding the variety of motivational factors. Specific administrative tactics are outlined. Four figures are included. (Contains 51 references.) (LMI)

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TRENDS & ISSUES

A series of papers highlighting recent developments in research and practice in educational management

Student Motivation, School Culture, and Academic Achievement

What School Leaders Can Do

Ron Renchler

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February 1992

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Foreword

Every educator needs to be concerned about motivation. It is a quality that students, teachers, parents, school administrators, and other members of the community must have if our educational system is to prepare young people adequately for the challenges and demands of the coming century.

Of course, the way these various groups of individuals generate and use motivation differs greatly. Students need motivation to learn, parents need it to track the educational progress of their sons and daughters, teachers need it to become better teachers, and school administrators need it to ensure that every facet of the schools they manage continues to improve.

Despite much excellent research during the last two decades, there is still a great deal we do not know about motivation. It remains a mystery, because we all have it, but we all exhibit it at different times, in different degrees, in different ways, and in different contexts. One aspect of the school administrator's job is to discover and nurture motivation among all the different individuals involved in the educational process. Motivation must be rewarded, increased, and sustained at all levels. However, administrators must not forget about their own motivation. Like those around them, they must find ways to remain motivated in the face of obstacles, distractions, and what may sometimes seem like universal indifference.

This sixth issue of the Trends & Issues series offers an overview of some recent studies of motivation as it operates at both the organizational and individual levels, especially in an educational context. Students in public schools obviously cannot be given the immediate financial and professional rewards given to individuals who display high levels of motivation in the workplace. However, there is a variety of other methods educators can use to awaken and sustain young people's motivation to learn. The greatest challenge educators face is to discover what those methods are and to make them an integral part of our educational system.

Ron Renchler received his doctoral degree from the University of Oregon in 1987. Since then, he has written and edited publications on a variety of topics, including educational administration, the urban superintendency, computers in education, and educational software.

Philip K. Piele
Professor and Director

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Introduction

Literature is filled with images of schoolchildren joyfully hurrying *away* from school. A long line of writers, including such notables as Blake and Shakespeare, have frequently described unhappy students at their desks and vividly portrayed their delight at escaping the boredom of the classroom. Fiction, poetry, and other forms of art provide us with literally hundreds of other similar images that, taken together, establish a long cultural tradition: learning is a profoundly boring activity.

Fortunately, our received opinion about education as reflected in our cultural tradition can differ greatly from our actual experience of classroom learning. Anyone who has participated in or closely observed the educational process has doubtlessly experienced and witnessed firsthand the excitement and joy that can be derived from learning or discovering something new. While we cannot expect these experiences to occur every day, they are nevertheless meaningful and powerful experiences, and they provide us with a basis for our conviction that education can, on the whole, be a valuable, interesting, and pleasurable activity. Ultimately, because we know from experience that such moments exist, we can acquire a strong motivation to learn, a trait that offers lifelong rewards.

Perhaps the primary job of principals, teachers, parents, and other educational stakeholders is to help students experience these moments as frequently as possible in an atmosphere where they can discover for themselves the pleasure of acquiring new knowledge. The goal of helping students acquire the self-motivation that leads to a perpetual desire to learn should be foremost in every educator's mind.

A Look Ahead

This publication focuses on motivation at the school level and reviews some recent developments in this area. It begins with a discussion in chapter 1 of the influence of school culture on student motivation. Recent work in this area indicates that a school's culture has a powerful effect on students' attitudes and levels of academic achievement. If educational leaders can find ways to create an environment that motivates students to learn, it is logical to assume that improved academic performance will soon follow.

Chapter 2 looks at the relationships among student motivation, current educational practices, and school restructuring. Research on motivation in educational settings indicates that many of our present pedagogical practices effectively crush most students' desire to learn. A number of individuals working in the field of educational motivation have called for radical change in the way we teach students, and with the restructuring movement gaining momentum, theirs are among the most persuasive voices arguing for new educational policies and practices.

Chapter 3 provides a brief overview of some current theories of motivation and the way it functions in various individuals. If superintendents and principals are to be successful in achieving their goals of strengthening student motivation and improving academic performance, they need at least a general understanding of the theories that help explain how motivation works.

Are Principals Themselves Motivated to Excel?

Faced with the complexity of the subject and the difficulty of knowing how to generate higher levels of motivation among students in their schools, principals and other educational administrators might be forgiven if they feel daunted at the prospect of tackling this particular educational problem. In fact, it is perhaps fittingly ironic that principals should feel discouraged, which is precisely the way students might feel when their teachers ask them to summon up their

motivation and improve their academic performance.

Perhaps the most obvious place for principals to begin addressing the problem of inadequate student motivation is to examine the role of motivation in their own lives. What is it that motivates an educational leader to desire better academic performance on the part of his or her students? Does it spring from an altruistic desire to improve students' lives? Is it a result of having a strong work ethic? Does it stem from the sense of self-esteem gained from knowing that one is doing one's job well? Does it originate in a desire to be successful professionally, to win greater respect from one's colleagues, to command a higher salary, to establish a reputation in the community as a first-rate educational administrator?

All of these are possible explanations for wanting to see improved educational performance, and all of them are acceptable, legitimate reasons for desiring greater motivation and better academic achievement at one's school. However, the most important lesson to be learned from a self-analysis of the role of motivation in one's life is in the discovery that the reasons for the presence or absence of motivation among students may be as infinitely varied and complex as the reasons for its presence or absence among school leaders.

One other point should be kept in mind when considering student motivation. It may be just as difficult for students to sustain motivation in their educational lives as it is for principals to sustain motivation in their professional careers. Students face many of the same difficulties, real or perceived, that principals face. If school leaders are equipped with the wisdom that comes from humility, sensitivity, and a constant reflection on the way that motivation functions in their own lives, it will probably be much easier for them to find ways to motivate their students.

Motivation and School Culture

An atmosphere or environment that nurtures the motivation to learn can be cultivated in the home, in the classroom, or, at a broader level, throughout an entire school. Much of the recent research on educational motivation has rightly centered on the classroom, where the majority of learning takes place and where students are most likely to acquire a strong motivation to gain new knowledge (Ames 1987, Brophy 1987, Grossnickle 1989, Wlodkowski and Jaynes 1990).

But achieving the goal of making the individual classroom a place that naturally motivates students to learn is much easier if students and teachers function in a school culture where academic success and the motivation to learn is expected, respected, and rewarded. An atmosphere where students learn to love learning for learning's sake, especially insofar as it evolves into academic achievement, is a chief characteristic of an effective school.

This chapter reviews some of the recent work on school culture and its relationship to student motivation.

Corporate Cultures and School Cultures

Much of the literature on school culture draws on and extends several descriptive studies of organizational culture in the corporate workplace (Deal and Kennedy 1982; Hickman and Silva 1984; Jelinek, Smircich, and Hirsch 1983; Maehr 1990; Peters and Waterman 1982; Schein 1984, 1985; and Wilkins 1983). Educational researchers such as Davis (1989), Deal (1987), Deal and Peterson (1990), and Sergiovanni (1987) have found very close parallels between the ways effectively managed businesses operate and the ways effectively managed schools function.

Although no single, universally accepted definition of school culture has been established, there is general agreement that school culture involves, in the words of Deal and Peterson (1990), "deep patterns of values, beliefs, and traditions that have formed over the course of [the school's] history." Over time, a school leader can, in conjunction with other stakeholders in the school, change its culture by discarding old values and beliefs, establishing new ones, or modifying elements that need to be changed.

Maehr and Fyans (1989), describing culture-building in organizations in general, characterize it as a fluid process:

> Groups tend to work out ways of getting along among themselves. They arrive at certain shared understandings regarding how, when, and where activities are to occur. Above all, they specify the meaning, the value, and the purpose of these activities. In particular, thoughts and perceptions about what is worth striving for are a critical feature of any culture. (p. 218)

Thus, a principal interested in establishing the motivation to learn and academic achievement as central features of a school's culture must first persuade everyone—students, teachers, parents, staff, and school board—that goals related to those areas are desirable, achievable, and sustainable.

The goals can ultimately become important enough to take on a life of their own, to become invested with meaning that reflects the basic purpose of the school and its reason for being. They can become part of the value system in which each participant in the school willingly and enthusiastically participates.

Shaping a School's Culture

School leaders have a number of channels through which they can shape a school's culture or climate. Good communication is, of course, central to successfully achieving goals. But actions must demonstrate what the words convey. Deal (1987) prescribes a few simple guidelines to bring about a reshaping of the school's culture:

> Old practices and other losses need to be buried and commemorated. Meaningless practices and symbols need to be analyzed and revitalized. Emerging visions, dreams, and hopes need to be articulated and celebrated.

The culture can be embodied and transformed, Deal says, through such channels as the school's shared values, heroes, rituals, ceremonies, stories, and cultural networks. If motivation and academic achievement are to be a definitive part of a school's culture, they must be communicated and celebrated in as many forums as possible.

There are a variety of practical ways that goals related to motivation and academic achievement can be communicated. In his review of studies focusing on organizational culture in effective schools, John Davis (1989) cites several studies that indicate that school leaders can communicate their goals by using a wide variety of concrete and symbolic tools:

> An extremely important component of the climate of the effective school is the presence of visible symbols which illustrate and confirm what is considered to be important in the school. Put another way, visible symbols manifest the school's underlying values and assumptions. . . . School newsletters, statements of goals, behavior codes, rituals, symbols, and legends are all part of the culture of the organization and convey messages of what the school really values.

Johnston (1987) echoes this point when he says, "Values are the bedrock of any institution. They articulate the essence of the organization's philosophy about how it goes about achieving success." He, too, points out that a school's values are communicated and disseminated through familiar means: leaders and heroes, the cultural network (the "grapevine"), and rituals and ceremonies.

The dynamics and logistics of most schools are such that the principal cannot possibly oversee the motivational needs of each and every student. But groups of people can be affected by the culture in which they participate, and this domain *is* under the control and stewardship of the principal.

Culture and Climate in Academically Effective Schools

The literature on school culture makes it clear that effective schools, that is, schools that demonstrate high standards of achievement in academics, have a culture characterized by a well-defined set of goals that all members of the school—administration, faculty, and students—value and promote. If a principal can establish and clearly communicate goals that define the expectations of the school with regard to academic achievement, and if the principal can rally a constituency of teachers and students to support those goals, then the motivation to achieve the goals is likely to follow.

Most reviews of the effective school literature point to the consensus that school culture and climate are central to academic success (Mackenzie 1983). Typical of the findings is the summary of Purkey and Smith (1983), who in their review of the literature on effective schools found a close correlation between positive school culture and academic quality:

> The literature indicates that a student's chance for success in learning cognitive skills is heavily influenced by the climate of the school. . . . A school-level culture press in the direction of academic achievement helps shape the environment (and climate) in which the student learns. An academically effective school would be likely to have clear goals related to student achievement, teachers and parents with high expectations, and a structure designed to maximize opportunities for students to learn. A press for academic success is more likely to realize that goal than would a climate that emphasizes affective growth or social development. (p. 440)

The Effect of School Leadership on Motivation and Achievement

The work of Leithwood and Montgomery (1984) is especially helpful in understanding the relationship of motivation to effective leadership

and school goals because it addresses the principal's motivation to become a more effective leader as well as the student's motivation to learn. They describe four stages that principals go through in the process of becoming more and more effective as school leaders.

The first, and least effective, stage, *administrator*, is characterized by the principal's desire simply to run "a smooth ship." At the second stage, *humanitarian*, principals focus primarily on goals that cultivate good interpersonal relations, especially among school staff. Principals at the third stage, *program manager*, perceive interpersonal relations as an avenue for achieving school-level goals that stress educational achievement. At the fourth and highest stage, *systematic problem solver*, principals become devoted to "a legitimate, comprehensive set of goals for students, and seek out the most effective means for their achievement" (p. 51).

One of the chief characteristics of highly effective principals at the systematic problem-solver stage is the ability to transfer their own desire and motivation to achieve valued goals to the other participants in the educational process. As Leithwood and Montgomery comment:

> Highly effective principals . . . seek out opportunities to clarify goals with staff, students, parents and other relevant members of the school community. They strive toward consensus about these goals and actively encourage the use of such goals in departmental and divisional planning. Such behaviour can be explained by the principal's knowledge of human functioning and the actions consistent with such knowledge. Highly effective principals appear to understand that school improvement goals will only direct the actions of staff, students and others to the extent that these people also adopt them as their own. Increases in principal effectiveness can be explained as increases in opportunities, provided by the principal, for all relevant others to agree upon and internalize approximately the same set of school improvement goals. (p. 31)

According to Leithwood and Montgomery, as principals become more and more effective, they come to understand that people will not be motivated unless they believe in the value of acting to achieve a particular goal:

> People are normally motivated to engage in behaviours which they believe will contribute to goal achievement. The strength of one's motivation to act depends on the importance attached to the goal in question and one's judgement about its achievability; motivational strength also depends on one's judgement about how successful a particular behavior will be in moving toward goal achievement. (p. 31)

Motivation on the part of the principal translates into motivation among students and staff through the functioning of goals, according to Leithwood and Montgomery. "Personally valued goals," they say, "are a central element in the principal's motivational structure—a stimulus for action" (p. 24).

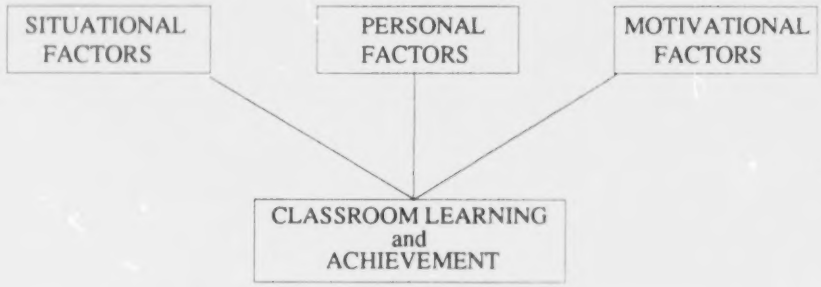
In a related study, Klug (1989) describes a measurement-based approach for analyzing the effectiveness of instructional leaders and provides a convenient model for understanding the principal's influence on student achievement and motivation. The model is shown in figure 1.

Klug notes that school leaders can have both direct and indirect impact on the level of motivation and achievement within two of the three areas shown in figure 1. Although the personal factors—differences in ability levels and personalities of individual students—usually fall outside a school leader's domain of influence, the other two categories, situational factors and motivational factors, are to some degree within a school leader's power to control. Klug's summary of the model describes how these two areas can be a source of influence:

> School leaders enter the achievement equation both directly and indirectly. By exercising certain behaviors that facilitate learning, they directly control situational (S) factors in which learning occurs. By shaping the school's instructional climate, thereby influencing the attitudes of teachers, students, parents, and the community at large toward education, they increase both student and teacher motivation and indirectly impact learning gains. (p. 253)

There are many strategies school leaders can use to reward motivation and promote academic achievement. For example, Huddle (1984), in a review of literature on effective leadership, cites a study in which principals in effective schools used a variety of methods to publicize the school goals and achievements in the area of academics.

Figure 1: A Conceptual Model for Understanding Classroom Learning and Achievement



Source: Klug (1989)

These included:

- Bringing in outstanding speakers for the National Honor Society meetings
- Placing names of special education students on the honor roll
- Publishing an annual report of academic achievement and mailing it to parents
- Displaying academic awards and trophies in the school trophy case

Maehr's Psychological Environment

In their book *The Motivation Factor: A Theory of Personal Investment*, Maehr and Braskamp (1986) focus extensively on motivation, or *personal investment*, as they term it, in organizational settings, especially as it functions among adults in the workplace. They conclude "that there is a relationship between organizational culture and personal investment—that knowing something about the cultural facets of an organization allows us to predict employee's job satisfaction and organizational commitment" (p. 153).

Recently, Maehr (1990) has turned his attention to the relationship between motivation and the organizational culture of schools. His work centers on what he terms the "psychological environment" of the school. School administrators, he asserts, are in the best position to shape a school's psychological environment. Drawing parallels between the school environment and the classroom environment, Maehr points to the similarities between teachers' and principals' leadership roles, as shown in figure 2 on page 7.

The dimensions Maehr includes in his model of the psychological environment of the school include:

> *Accomplishment*—Emphasis on excellence and pursuit of academic challenges
>
> *Power*—Emphasis on interpersonal competition, social comparison, achievement
>
> *Recognition*—Emphasis on social recognition for achievement and the importance of school for attaining future goals and rewards
>
> *Affiliation*—Perceived sense of community, good interpersonal relations among teachers and students
>
> *Strength/Saliency*—The perception that the school knows what it is about and that students know what is expected.

Maehr describes how the school's psychological environment shapes a student's motivation:

> Motivation can be characterized by a student's personal investment in a given task. The magnitude of motivation is influenced by the psychological environment of a school, that is, by the meaning given to the overall education experiences. (p. 2)

To test the effectiveness of his model, Maehr conducted an analysis of a data set collected from more than 16,000 students in the

Figure 2: Parallel Leadership Roles Extant in Schools

TEACHER

(Goals—>Behavior)—>Classroom Context—>Student Motivation & Personal Investment

PRINCIPAL

(Goals—>Behavior)—>School Context—>Student/Staff Motivation & Personal Investment

Source: Maehr (1990)

fourth, sixth, eighth, and tenth grades in 800 public schools in Illinois. He attempted to determine whether several variables, including psychological environment and school leadership, had an impact on student motivation. His findings indicated that goals that stressed motivation and achievement did have an impact, and that school leadership qualities did have an influence on a school's psychological environment.

Maehr concluded that "goal stresses associated with the school environment seem to relate systematically to student motivation and achievement" (p. 46), and he reported that "the psychological environment of the school is a measurable variable, a variable of some importance in predicting motivation and achievement of students" (p. 52).

The influence of school culture as a conduit for motivating students toward academic excellence has perhaps been underestimated. Teachers have traditionally shouldered most of the burden of motivating students toward academic achievement. However, because research continues to demonstrate the powerful effect of school culture and climate on students' attitudes toward education, principals now must share that responsibility. They must give increased attention to the fact that they, too, are key players in the complex formula that shapes student motivation.

By formulating and clearly communicating relevant goals, by developing and instituting workable programs to sustain those goals, and by monitoring and rewarding success, a principal can shape a school's culture so that it reflects the importance of motivation directed toward academic success.

Motivation and School Restructuring

The findings reported in the literature on educational motivation have placed many school leaders in a difficult position. Much of the research indicates that our present instructional practices tend to diminish motivation for academic achievement rather than increase it. According to many of the researchers who conduct motivation studies in educational settings, teachers and school leaders are being asked to place their faith in educational policies and instructional practices that have already been shown to be detrimental to developing motivation. Simply put, they claim that our educational system is as much to blame for student apathy as the students themselves.

This chapter reviews some of the relevant literature and reports on the recommendations these researchers have made for improving student motivation. The chapter concludes with some discussion of the need for change as it relates to the school restructuring movement.

Grade-Related and Age-Related Changes in Levels of Motivation

It is generally recognized that motivation and academic achievement among younger children are contingent to some degree on grade- and age-related factors. Research on the relationship between a student's age and his or her achievement beliefs and motivational orientation indicates that children's confidence in their achievement generally declines as they grow older (Stipek 1984). This decline is most pronounced at the age of about 6 and again at age 12 or 13.

Eccles, Midgeley, and Adler (1984) have sought to measure the impact of school environment on these changes. Although the results of their studies were confounded by age-related changes among their student subjects, they reported "a causal link between grade-related changes in educational environments and age-related student attitudes" (p. 321). Their suggestions for managing these changes include some criticism of current school environment practices and some suggestions for school restructuring to eliminate these weaknesses:

> As children mature they become more skillful, knowledgeable, and competent; they become better able to take responsibility, make decisions, control their lives. They also feel more able to take responsibility and to make academic decisions. . . . One would hope that with increasing grade level, students would assume greater autonomy and control over their lives and learning. In addition, one would hope that schools would provide an environment that would facilitate task involvement rather than ego involvement, particularly as children enter early adolescence.
>
> Unfortunately there is evidence that just the opposite is true. As students proceed through the grades, the classroom is characterized by a decrease in student autonomy and an increase in processes which enhance ego involvement at the expense of task involvement. (pp. 322-23)

Eccles and her colleagues are not alone in their criticism of current educational practices that have a negative influence on student motivation. Another proponent of school reform for the purpose of revitalizing student motivation is Raffini (1988). Basing his arguments on Covington's (1983, 1984) construct of the self-worth motive, Raffini argues that students caught up in a system that dooms them to failure channel their motivation into behaviors that cover up that failure and thus protect their sense of self-worth:

> Apathy is a way for many students to avoid a sense of failure. Those behaving from this motive approach each new learning experience with apprehension and fear—often masked with

apathy, aloofness, or indifference. Their philosophy toward schools becomes "Nothing ventured, nothing failed." Teachers and parents worry that they are unmotivated. In reality, they are highly motivated to protect their sense of self-worth. As they get older they begin to reject education completely. If they state publicly that school is a valueless, boring waste of time, then their self-worth is protected when they receive a failing grade. These students have discovered that it is less painful to reject school than to reject themselves. (p. 12)

Raffini proposes a four-fold approach that would remove motivational barriers and help students redirect their behaviors away from failure-avoiding activities toward academic applications. He describes how these four strategies can aid in promoting the rediscovery of an interest in learning:

1. Individual goal-setting structures allow students to define their own criteria for success.
2. Outcome-based instruction and evaluation make it possible for slower students to experience success without having to compete with faster students.
3. Attribution retraining can help apathetic students view failure as a lack of effort rather than a lack of ability.
4. Cooperative learning activities help students realize that personal effort can contribute to group as well as individual goals. (p. 27)

The Importance of Implicit Motivation

Stipek (1988) makes a strong case for strengthening the degree of intrinsic motivation students feel for learning. While she does not argue for the complete elimination of extrinsic reward systems, she believes that "there are many benefits to maximizing intrinsic motivation and many ways to foster it" (p. 72). She identifies four perspectives from which intrinsic motivation can be viewed: competency motivation, curiosity, autonomy, and internalized motivation.

Competency motivation assumes "that individuals engage in tasks, in part, for the purpose of developing competence and experiencing the positive feeling of efficacy associated with successful mastery attempts" (p. 43). The second perspective, curiosity, assumes "that individuals are innately curious about novel events and activities that are somewhat discrepant with their expectations" (p. 39). Autonomy involves the idea that humans have "a natural need to feel self-determining. They want to believe that they are engaging in activities by their own volition—because they want to—rather than to achieve some external reward or to avoid punishment" (p. 44). Internalized motivation "assumes that some children engage in tasks in the absence of external reinforcement because they learn to value academic work" (p. 39).

Stipek describes some techniques that promote intrinsic motivation but suggests that they are rarely found in today's classrooms or schools:

> Students are intrinsically motivated to work when the threat of negative external evaluation is not salient and when their attention is not focused on extrinsic reasons for completing tasks. They will also feel more competent and proud, and thus more intrinsically interested in tasks, when they can take responsibility for their success.
>
> Allowing some student choice enhances intrinsic interest in school tasks, and it teaches self-management skills that are essential for success in higher grades and the workplace. It is impossible for children to develop autonomy and a sense of responsibility if they are always told what to do, and how, and when to do it. (p. 73)

She recommends challenging but fair task assignments, the use of positive classroom language, mastery-based evaluation systems, and cooperative learning structures to foster intrinsic motivation toward academic learning.

Another voice in matters related to student motivation belongs to Glasser (1990), who theorizes that all motivation springs from an individual's desire to fulfill one of five basic needs: survival, love, power, fun, and freedom. Glasser condemns what he calls "boss management" in educational systems, which are behaviors that assume that students can be coerced into becoming motivated:

> Boss-managers firmly believe that people can be motivated from the outside: They fail to understand that all of our motivation comes from within ourselves.

> Boss-teachers and administrators constantly lament that students are not motivated, but what they are actually saying is that they do not know how to persuade students to work. And as long as they continue to believe in coercion, they never will. (p. 39)

Glasser argues in favor of "lead management," which involves empowering students to be responsible for their own needs and accomplishments, teaching them in cooperative groups, and eliminating grades below a B.

The Challenge of School Restructuring

Maehr (1991) has argued persuasively that school administrators should seize the opportunity offered by the school restructuring movement to effect changes in the entire school environment as well as in the individual classroom environment. His argument goes hand in hand with the findings of motivation research. "Few have seriously considered motivation vis-a-vis the current restructuring movement," he says,

> and few have considered that the school as an entity in its own right, may have effects that supersede those of individual classrooms and the acts of individual teachers. And so it is that we wish to make the argument that now is the time to consider school, as well as instructional, curricular, and classroom change. (p. 2)

He notes that because school leaders can establish, promote, or ignore policies, they may have more effect on education than that generated at the classroom level.

Maehr provides an outline that identifies areas where schoolwide policies and procedures might well have an impact on the psychological environment of the school and thus lead to increased motivation. He identifies six target areas and provides examples of goals and strategies for bringing about change in a restructured environment.

Tasks

Tasks refer to the nature of the work undertaken by students in the school. Such tasks should help students focus on the intrinsic value of learning. Goals in this area should reduce reliance on extrinsic incentives, emphasize the fun of learning, and be challenging to all students. Strategies for accomplishing these goals include initiating programs that take advantage of the students' background, that stress goal setting and self-regulation/management, and that take students to nonschool settings for learning experiences.

Authority

Schools should delegate responsibility by focusing on student participation in learning/school decisions. Goals include providing opportunities for developing independence and leadership skills among students. Strategies include offering students choices in their instructional settings and supporting their participation in cocurricular and extracurricular activities.

Recognition

There should be extensive use of recognition and rewards in the school setting. Goals should be established that will provide opportunities for all students to be recognized, recognize progress in goal attainment, and emphasize a broad array of learning activities. Strategies include "personal best" awards and recognition of a wide range of school-related achievements.

Grouping

Grouping refers to student interaction, social skills, and values. There should be goals that bring about an environment of acceptance and appreciation of all students, that broaden the range of social interaction among students, including at-risk groups, and that enhance social skills and humane values. Strategies should include programs that provide occasions for group learning and problem solving and that foster development of subgroups (teams, schools within schools, and so forth).

Evaluation

Goals regarding the nature and use of evaluation and assessment procedures include increasing students' sense of competence and self-efficacy, increasing their awareness of their unique sets of talents, and encouraging them to understand failure as a natural part of learning and life.

Strategies to accomplish these goals include a reduction in the emphasis on social comparisons of achievement by minimizing public reference to normative evaluation standards such as grades and test scores. It is also important to create opportunities for students to assess progress toward goals they have set.

Time

Time must be effectively managed to carry out plans and reach goals. Goals include improving the rate of work completion, improving skills in planning and organization, and improving self-management ability. Strategies include developing programs that teach time management skills and offering students the opportunity to progress at their own rate when possible.

Maehr acknowledges that the successful implementation of new educational policies and practices depends upon school leaders who have the courage and motivation to seize the opportunity that restructuring offers. As Maehr puts it, "The time is right for restructuring, and that restructuring will indeed take place. The question is will it take place in such a way that motivation and the investment in learning of students will be enhanced" (p. 8).

With the current trend toward restructuring gaining momentum (Conley 1991), educators at all levels inevitably face some changes in the ways schools function. Principals will be asked to demonstrate even higher levels of effective leadership as changes occur. The time has come for them to analyze their own level of motivation as it relates to their role in a restructuring process that will affect the motivation students feel toward learning for many years to come.

Some Recent Theories of Motivation

Despite the fact that motivation has historically been a much discussed topic in education, research into the theory of motivation and the practice of producing it is of fairly recent vintage. Although one of the most prominent figures in motivation research, David McClelland, began his work on the subject as early as the 1940s, it was not until the last decade or two that motivation theory began to be fully developed.

This chapter provides an overview of several different approaches to the concept of motivation and the way it functions in individuals. By familiarizing themselves with some of the theories of motivation, school administrators can perhaps better understand the role motivation plays in their own and their students' lives.

Motivation as a Personal Trait

According to Maehr and Braskamp (1986), McClelland and his colleagues set out to systematize the study of motivation by designing assessment procedures that would help identify the characteristics associated with highly motivated personalities. One stream of McClelland's research sought to identify the motives related to achievement behavior. Certain individuals, he found, could be characterized by their desire to be successful. These individuals demonstrated specific behaviors that identified them as "achievers" (McClelland 1961, 1985).

The source of this trait was the subject of a second, broader area of McClelland's research, one that is of special importance to educators. McClelland investigated the possibility that differences in child-rearing practices in various societies and cultures accounted for differences in the development of motivation in individuals. He found that "child-rearing practices that emphasize independence training and mastery produce people who are high in achievement motivation" (Maehr and Braskamp 1986, p. 21).

McClelland also studied the strength of *power motivation* and *affiliation motivation* that individuals exhibit within groups or organizations. Power motivation might be displayed in educational settings by students who are extremely competitive, who gain a sense of power by being recognized as the brightest student or as the student most likely to succeed. Affiliation motivation is exhibited in response to a desire for approval in social contexts, for example, in situations where a student receives praise for doing well from family or friends.

Motivation in Response to Situations

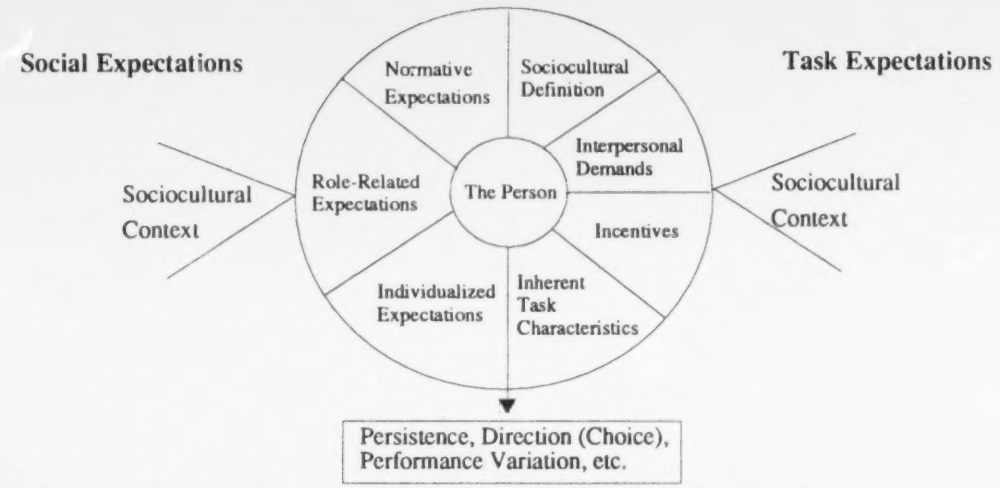
In a review of research on motivation as it is exhibited in specific contexts or situations, Maehr and Braskamp (1986) offer a "counterbalancing perspective" to McClelland's "focus on personality as a cause of motivation." Maehr and Braskamp conclude that "perhaps more than we realize, we are what we are expected to be and we do what the task and our significant others allow and demand" (p. 35).

A useful taxonomy for the study of situations that affect motivation is shown in figure 3.

Several of the sectors in the taxonomy are especially important in school settings. *Normative expectations* apply to all group members; each member is expected to adhere to the established norms of the group. Such expectations can exist in very basic social units, including the family, clubs, and schools. Because individuals are influenced by these social groups quite early in life, they can acquire at young ages basic attitudes about what is worth achieving and how it can be achieved.

Another important category is *individualized*

Figure 3: Model of Situational/Contextual Factors That Influence Motivation



Source: Maehr and Braskamp (1986)

expectations, that is, what significant people, such as teachers and principals, believe about a specific student. Some research in this area as it relates to the workplace indicates that an employer's belief about the effectiveness of an employee influences the productivity of that worker (Steers 1981).

Inherent *task characteristics* are especially important in the educational arena. Maehr and Braskamp (1986) describe the characteristics of this category:

> Research on *intrinsic motivation* . . . has suggested that a task that possesses a certain optimum level of uncertainty and unpredictability tends to be generally attractive. Although social experiences can reduce the search for novelty, new information, and challenge, it appears that from the start, human beings have a built-in attraction to these features in tasks. (p. 32)

Thus, it is likely that schools where the students feel appropriately challenged to be academically successful and where the rewards of learning take the form of problem solving or successfully meeting challenges will have a higher level of motivation among its students.

Sociocultural definition involves the degree to which an individual's social or cultural group supports a particular task or goal. In this context, schools where academic achievement is emphasized and rewarded might logically be expected to have more highly motivated students.

The category of *interpersonal demands* in the taxonomy is also important. Research on cooperative learning has frequently demonstrated that individuals react differently to different educational settings. Some students thrive in group learning situations where cooperation and personal interaction are operative, while others seem to do best working alone. Schools in which opportunities exist for all students to participate in ways that are best suited to their personal needs and preferences are probably more likely to have a larger number of motivated students.

One other category, *incentives*, is central to the study of motivation in schools. Grades are obviously an incentive of great importance to most students, but the use of grades as an incentive or as a form of punishment can have long-term impact on student motivation. As Maehr and Braskamp point out, "Different incentives are likely to be associated with different tasks, and the manner in which these incentives are designed, presented, or made available is important" (p. 33).

Motivation and the Concept of Self

One final area of study that has influenced recent theory on motivation is its relationship to cognition, or the thought processes an individual goes through when placed in situations where motivation comes into play (Ames 1986, Salancik and Pfeffer 1978). The way a person responds to a task and his or her decision to invest the time and energy necessary to succeed in accomplishing it is dependent upon a complex blend of present thoughts and previous experiences.

This line of study involves two areas of focus: *thoughts about self* and *thoughts about situations*. In reviewing the research literature on the topic of self as it relates to motivation, Maehr and Braskamp (1986) have identified three areas in which self-concept plays an important role. The three areas are self-consistency, self-confidence, and self-determination.

Self-Consistency

This concept involves an individual's proclivity to behave in a manner consistent with his or her self-image. Once a self-image has been formed, an individual begins to perceive circumstances and respond to them in a way that reinforces that self-image.

Because the opinions of significant others are especially powerful at various critical stages in a person's life, self-image is often formed during the early stages of an individual's development and can be very difficult to overcome. This plays an obvious role in educational settings, where a student might well appear to be unmotivated in order to maintain a sense of consistency with a self-image shaped by the experience of having been labeled as a "failure." As Maehr and Braskamp conclude,

> People do try to square their thoughts with what they see happening to them. Inconsistencies in thought are motivating. We can tolerate some inconsistency some of the time, but apparently we can tolerate only so much. (p. 37)

Self-Confidence

Researchers have often confirmed the notion that a person's sense of self-confidence is a critical variable in achieving success and in becoming motivated to attempt certain tasks (Atkinson and Feather 1966, Vroom 1964). Like the "little train that could," individuals develop preconceived notions about their chances for success or failure based upon their level of self-confidence.

Experiments by Weiner (1979, 1983, 1984) demonstrated that when individuals with a low sense of self-confidence succeeded in carrying out a task, they often attributed their achievement to luck or to the lack of difficulty of the task rather than to their own skill. On the other hand, individuals with a high level of self-confidence usually took full credit for accomplishing the task successfully.

As an extension of self-image, levels of self-confidence are often established in the early stages of a person's development. Studies have shown that significant others also play an extremely important role in shaping an individual's self-confidence (Haas and Maehr 1965; Maehr, Mensing, and Nafzinger 1962).

Self-Determination

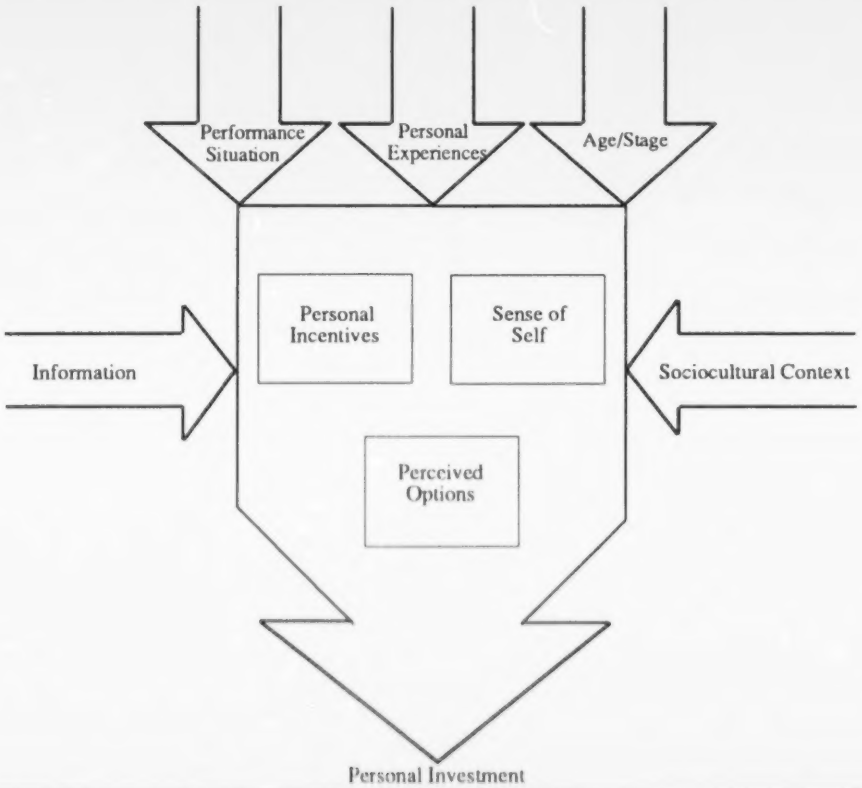
Recent work on self-determination has pointed to the importance of cultivating a sense of ownership or of control over a situation before individuals will become motivated to act (deCharms 1984, Deci 1980, Hackman and Oldham 1980). In a school setting, a sense of self-determination could well be a critical element in engendering motivation among students.

The Complexity of Motivation

The various theories that have sprung from research on motivation indicate the complexity of the problem of determining the possible interactions among the many components—individual differences, situational differences, social and cultural factors, and cognition. In concluding their review of motivation theory, Maehr and Braskamp (1986) suggest how an individual's level of motivation can be derived from one or more of these sources:

> When we boil down the antecedents of motivation and personal investment to their simplest

Figure 4: Antecedents of Meaning and Personal Investment



Source: Maehr and Braskamp (1986)

form, we are inclined to suggest that people do what they believe they *can* do and what they believe is *worth* doing. Judgments of opportunity to perform and the value to the person in performing sum up most of what we need to consider in discussing motivation. The former involves not only the personal sense of competence but also perceptions of options. The latter involves not only the norms people live by as the result of sociocultural groups in which they participate but the individualized goal they hold for themselves—what they are and what they hope to become.

Maehr and Braskamp go on to explore the components of motivation from a perspective that is reflected in their use of the term *personal investment*. They outline the following five points that define their approach to the problem of theorizing about motivation:

1. The study of motivation begins and ends with the study of *behavior*. The behavioral patterns associated with motivation are collectively referred to as personal investment.
2. The *direction* of behavior is of primary significance; thus, the focus is on the apparent choices and decisions made by people.
3. It is the *meaning* of the situation to the person that determines personal investment.
4. The meaning of a situation can be assessed, and its origins can be determined.
5. Motivation is a *process* that is embedded in the ongoing stream of behavior.

Maehr and Braskamp's graphic representation of the antecedents of motivation and meaning is shown in figure 4.

The theory of personal investment centers on two basic ideas:

1. People invest themselves in certain activities depending on the meaning these activities have for them.
2. Meaning involves three interrelated categories of cognition: personal incentives, sense of self, and perceived options.

Although the focus of Maehr and Braskamp's theory as it is developed in *The Motivation Factor* is on how motivation functions in the workplace, it has direct applications to the concept of motivation in educational settings. Students, like individual workers, must derive some sense of personal reward from specific tasks before they can be expected to generate any significant motivation to carry out the task. In their role as educational managers, principals bear some of the responsibility for helping students to generate a feeling of value and reward when they engage in and complete academic work. This feeling can occur at both the individual level and at the school level.

The various theories that have been proposed to explain how motivation operates in people's lives can perhaps help principals understand not only the different levels of motivation that exist among students in a school but also the different levels of motivation that exist across schools. And hopefully such theories can also help principals understand the importance of analyzing the role that motivation plays in their own lives as they seek a happy fit between their own set of values and the values being shaped at the schools where they serve as educational leaders.

Conclusion

A recent survey of 1,879 students listed in Who's Who Among American High School Students, three-fourths of whom had A averages, indicated that their level of motivation was not particularly high. More than half of them reported that they studied no more than seven hours each week, and three-fourths of them indicated that they would not increase their study time even if a proposed national achievement test became a reality. The lack of enthusiasm for learning among the student respondents lead Paul Krouse, publisher of Who's Who, to ask, "What is wrong with our educational system that our best and brightest students are so unmotivated?" ("Column One" 1991).

There are no easy answers to Mr. Krouse's question, but that does not mean that we should give up trying to answer it. Just as we want our students to remain motivated to learn, we must remain motivated to find a solution to an admittedly difficult problem. Like most problems, the lack of motivation among students today is probably the result of several causes, some within our immediate control, some not.

Each of the preceding chapters has suggested a different approach to improving motivation in educational settings: cultivating a school culture that establishes and celebrates the value of academic achievement and the motivation that leads to it, restructuring our schools so that new methods of instruction that might be more effective can be tested, and understanding the various factors that shape an individual's proclivity to be motivated or unmotivated in a particular set of circumstances.

It is not likely that school leaders can devise a single programmatic approach that will be a panacea for the many problems that contribute to a lack of student motivation. Given this situation, perhaps it is best to try many different things. Here are some steps to consider:

- Analyze the ways that motivation operates in your own life and develop a clear way of communicating your understanding of it to teachers and students.
- Demonstrate to students how motivation plays an important role in your own life, both professionally and personally.
- Work with students, teachers, parents, and others to establish challenging but achievable school goals that promote academic achievement and the motivation that goes with it.
- Seek ways to demonstrate how motivation plays an important role in noneducational settings.
- Encourage instructional programs that offer alternatives to traditional educational practices with the idea that they might be more effective in motivating students.
- Make motivation a frequent topic of discussion among students, teachers, and other staff.
- Show students that success is important. Recognize the variety of ways that students can succeed. Reward success in all its forms.
- Develop or schedule teacher inservice programs that focus on motivation.
- Participate in administrator inservice programs that focus on motivation.
- Demonstrate through your own actions that learning is a lifelong process that can be pleasurable for its own sake.
- Understand and promote the value of intrinsic motivation.
- Use extrinsic reward systems judiciously.
- Invite motivational speakers to your school.
- Ensure that restructuring programs address the issues related to student motivation.
- Get parents involved in disucssing the issue of motivation.

If school leaders expect students to become motivated to learn, they must first sustain their own motivation to create schools where students discover that learning is an exciting and rewarding activity.

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